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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 351

Condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ISSA, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya.

Whereas on April 1, 2017, the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported that authorities in Chechnya, a republic of the Russian Federation, had abducted, detained, and tortured over 100 men due to their actual or suspected sexual orientation;

Whereas multiple independent and first-hand accounts have subsequently corroborated the Novaya Gazeta report, and describe a campaign of persecution by Chechen officials against men due to their actual or suspected sexual orientation;

Whereas as a result of this persecution, at least three deaths have been reported and many individuals have been forced to flee Chechnya;

Whereas Chechen officials have denied the existence of such persecution, including through a statement by the spokesman for Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov that "You cannot arrest or repress people who don't exist in the republic.";

Whereas the same spokesman for Ramzan Kadyrov has also stated that "If such people existed in Chechnya, law enforcement would not have to worry about them, as their own relatives would have sent them to where they could never return," and credible reports indicate that Chechen authorities have encouraged families to carry out so-called "honor killings" of relatives due to their actual or suspected sexual orientation;

Whereas Chechnya is a constituent republic of the Russian Federation and subject to its laws, and Ramzan Kadyrov was installed as the leader of Chechnya by Russian President Vladimir Putin;

Whereas Chechen authorities have a long history of violating the fundamental human rights of their citizens, including through extra-judicial executions, forced disappearances, and torture of government critics;

Whereas Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed reports of persecution in Chechnya and termed them "phantom complaints";

Whereas Russia's Human Rights Ombudsman, Tatyana Moskalkova, has also claimed that such reports should not be believed because formal complaints have not been registered with the appropriate authorities;

Whereas the Russian Federation is a participating State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and thus has agreed to guarantee the fundamental human rights of all of its citizens;

Whereas on April 7, 2017, the United States Department of State issued a statement saying “We categorically condemn the persecution of individuals based on their sexual orientation” and urging the Government of the Russian Federation to take steps to ensure the release of all those wrongfully detained in Chechnya, and to conduct a credible investigation of the reports; and

Whereas on April 17, 2017, United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley issued a statement saying “Chechen authorities must immediately investigate these allegations, hold anyone involved accountable, and take steps to prevent future abuses. We are against all forms of discrimination, including against people based on sexual orientation. When left unchecked, discrimination and human rights abuses can lead to destabilization and conflict.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns the violence and persecution in
3 Chechnya and calls on Chechen officials to imme-
4 diately cease the abduction, detention, and torture of
5 individuals on the basis of their actual or suspected
6 sexual orientation, and hold accountable all those in-
7 volved in perpetrating such abuses;

8 (2) calls on the Government of the Russian
9 Federation to protect the human rights of all its citi-

1 zens, condemn the violence and persecution, inves-
2 tigate these crimes in Chechnya, and hold account-
3 able all those involved in perpetrating such abuses;

4 (3) calls on the United States Government to
5 continue to condemn the violence and persecution in
6 Chechnya and demand the release of individuals
7 wrongfully detained; and

8 (4) affirms that the rights to freedom of assem-
9 bly, association, and expression and freedom from
10 extrajudicial detention and violence are universal
11 human rights that apply to all persons, and that
12 countries that fail to respect these rights jeopardize
13 the security and prosperity of all their citizens.